

# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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November 2006

## NEWSLETTE

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Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, November 16, 2006** at 7:30 PM  
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,  
San Francisco

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### November Program

#### My Favorite Bromeliads – A Photographic Appreciation

This month our speaker will be **Ron Parsons** who will provide a slide show on his favorite bromeliads. Ron has been growing orchids and photographing plants for many years. He has over 25,000 slides of orchid species and gives lectures on them internationally. He is also the co-author of “Masdevallias, Gems of the Orchid World”. Ron’s beautiful photographs have been published widely and we are grateful that he will share some of his bromeliad photos with us. (Not only is Ron a great photographer, he is a great bromeliad grower. – Ed.)



This beautiful photo of *Nidularium* Leprosa was taken by Herb Plever and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

### November Refreshments

**Brian Ransom** and **Dennis Westler** signed up for refreshments this month.

## October Meeting

Last month **Tom Vincze** showed us wonderful scenes of his trip this summer to Ecuador. Most of the spectacular bromeliads were not identified by our members. Too bad we had not checked out the photos with the recent books on the Bromeliads of Ecuador before the show. After the show, Tom provided for sale many bromeliads that he had purchased in Ecuador. Thanks Tom for a great show. Even though we have seen other shows on Ecuador, yours was different and very interesting.



This photo of *Nidularium innocentii* is by Dorothy Berg and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

## Autumn Chores

This article by Daniel Arcos first appeared in the October 1979 publication of the Bromeliad Study Group of Northern California.

With autumn's arrival bromeliad growers begin to take precautions with plants that have been summering out of doors. Many of the tenderest will be brought indoors or into the greenhouse. To account for lack of space, offshoots will be removed (the plant table will find homes for these), and old mothers cut after giving their best in pups. However, if you are like me, many of your bromeliads will have to face the brunt of the winter rains that Northern California usually gets.

Silver Tillandsias are moved to sheltered locations out of the rain, but Tillandsias like *T. violacea*, *T. imperialis*, and *T. lieboldiana* will stay right out in it and be the better for it. One member brought a *T. violacea* to a meeting this summer that had withstood -8C (18F) in Marin County last winter.

All Pitcairnioideae can be left out except for the most tender Dyckias and Pitcairnias (*all Hechtias should be moved indoors – Ed.*)

Aechmeas, Neoregelias, and other Bromelioideae cups should have a little shelter, and if there is a threat of frost or a freeze, the water should be removed from the cups. A member from Sacramento left his *Portea petropolitana* var. *petropolitana* outside last winter just because he couldn't find enough space for it inside the house. The result was that in the spring the *Portea* bloomed with a fantastically healthy inflorescence and this winter he will have even hardier pups.

Listen to the weatherman this winter and in case of frost, sheets, blankets, and newspapers can quickly protect your bromeliads. You can use plastic sheeting too though I keep hearing that the plastic freezes too and if it is touching any foliage that part of the plant will suffer damage.

Rot is a terrible thing in the winter and the damage it causes may not be realized until the spring when centers start falling out. This is primarily caused by the prolonged wetness that accompanies the cold. One reason to keep susceptible bromeliads out of the rain. But which ones are susceptible? Probably all. I've lost plants others in my neighborhood did not and vice versa. Certainly, microclimates play a large part in determining which plants will suffer and which will not, but nothing is predictable with bromeliads. So we can only guess at what this winter will bring and we will learn from it by watching its effects on our plants and discussing them with fellow growers.

## The Genus *Nidularium*

## (Concluded)

This article is by Gerry Stansfield, Cultivar Registrar of the New Zealand Bromeliad Society, from a talk he gave to a local society in Auckland. The article appeared in the October and November 2005 "Bromeliana", newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society. He excerpted and/or modified some text. The article will be published in two installments.

***Nidularium fulgens***. Still one of the most popular of the nidulariums and one of the hardiest, Fulgens is from the Latin "fulgens, fulgentis" meaning that which glistens or shines, an apt description for this plant with its light to dark green shiny leaves with dark green spots and its heavily serrated leaf edges. At flowering time the cup becomes a bright cerise with blue flowers. This is known as the red bract form; there are also an orange bract form and a bronze form, and I am told that in Australia they have a white bract form. *N. fulgens* has been used in both hybridizing and bi-generics because of its strongly dominant genes for the serrated leaf edges and its brilliant red centre.

***Nidularium innocentii***. Named by Charles Lemaire in 1855 in honor of The Marquis de St. Innocent, a well known plant grower and breeder in France. This lovely species with white flowers has two variegated forms: *v. lineatum* which has many fine, green longitudinal lines on a white background and *v. striatum* with more widely spaced thicker lines. *N. Nana* is a delightful dwarf form of *N. innocentii*. Former *v. wittmackianum* is now *N. longiflorum v. lineatum* can produce some finely multi-striped plants, but keep in mind that as in many variegates some of its pups may also revert to only a few stripes and even plain green.

***Nidularium purpureum***. This is a lovely Nidularium with its thin metallic purple leaves with a dark green matte upper surface and a glossy metallic purple under surface. The centre nest becomes a rusty red at flowering time with small rosy red flowers. There is a lovely form of this plant with white striping and blotches. It was called *N. purpureum v. albiflorum* but now has

been elevated to the species *Nidularium albiflorum*.



This photo of *Nidularium albiflorum* is by Dorothy Berg and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

***Nidularium procerum***. This plant is extremely variable and has the largest distribution of the genus ranging from Bahia in the north down to southern Brazil in Rio Grande de Sul. It grows from sea level to almost 1000 m altitude both as an epiphyte and a terrestrial. The plants vary from plain green foliage to rusty red (see *N. Rusty*, a new hybrid named in New Zealand) with only very slight variation in the floral bracts. Elton Leme tells us that there are many clones of this plant and if we take a look at his wonderful book "**Nidularium: Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest**" (2000) we can see the various color ranges. I have two different forms: one we imported some 40 years ago as *N. lubbersii*, which we now know is *N. procerum* and the other which was supposed to have been collected in the wild and sent to me from Australia which strangely likes to grow more like a tree than a bromeliad. Two others that we include in the procerum group are *Nidularium lubbersianum* and *Nidularium terminale*; we grow these here in New Zealand as well.

***Nidularium regelioides***. Botanically, this plant has been reclassified as *N. rutilans*, but I prefer to distinguish the plant from *N. rutilans* and call it *regelioides* "Ule" (who found and described it in 1898.). The plant is an old favorite with its thick leathery green leaves with darker green blotches. The flowers are orange-red.



This photo of *Nidularium regelioides variegata* is by Dorothy Berg and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

***Nidularium rutilans*.** This is a handsome plant with long narrow tapered green leaves with spots of darker green; the short narrow floral bracts are bright crimson with rose-salmon flowers. This plant has a tubular appearance and in my view is dissimilar from *regelioides*, which has more of a rosette form. (Ed. Note – Apparently the flower and bract characters of both plants are sufficiently similar for Elton Leme to have placed *regelioides* in synonymy with *rutilans* in his pioneer new work “*Nidularium*”. Ule in describing *regelioides* distinguished it from *rutilans* because of the former’s more conspicuous spines, a finding which Leme’s research seems to have negated. The leaf conformations of the clones of the plants I’ve grown do seem to be different; *rutilans* appears to have fewer longer leaves that are more spread out and laxly and widely spaced, whereas the leaves of *regelioides* are tightly overlapping to form a compact flat rosette. **BUT**, Elton assures me that he has found these and a number of other different forms within the same *rutilans* population! They differed in conformation, size, leaf width, etc. This is yet another example of bromeliad variability, so until we have evidence to the contrary from DNA studies, we’ll just have to accept that *regelioides* is a synonym for *rutilans*.)

***Nidularium Leprosa*.** This is another *Nidularium* with a checkered history; it has been called *N. rosulatum*, *N. regelioides* var.

*rosulatum*, *N. Spotty* (in Australia), and finally Derek Butcher fixed its name as *Nidularium Leprosa*. It is like *N. regelioides* but has stronger dark red spots over the leaves. At flowering, the floral bracts are pinker than the orange-red bracts of *regelioides*. The plant forms a nice rosette and can grow quite large.

***Nidularium terminale*.** Although this is a found species, it is similar to the *procerum* grouping so much as it has long narrow strap-like foliage and strong serrated leaf edges. As with the *procerum* group, the deep red flower head rises up and is star shaped.

Three nice species rarely seen in NZ are

***Nidularium atalaiaense*.** This very lovely *Nidularium* with very narrow, heavily spined leaves comes from Rio de Janeiro. The foliage is a rusty red under side and light green on top; the flowers are bluish.



This photo of *Nidularium innocentii* is by Derek Butcher and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

***Nidularium espiritosantense*.** This one comes from the Brazilian state of Espirito Santo. It is similar to *regelioides* in size and shape, but the lush green leaves are fussed with orange coloring near and at the tips.

***Nidularium amorimii*.** This lovely *Nidularium* comes from Bahia in the north. It is an attractive

rosette similar to *fulgens* but the foliage is a rusty red with dark red floral bracts and blue flowers.

And now for some hybrids:

***Nidularium Chantrieri***. This lovely hybrid was made in 1895 by Edouard André the famous French collector, and was named in honor of his friend Chantrier the French by crossing *Nidularium innocentii* v. *innocentii* with *Nidularium fulgens*.

***Nidularium Francois Spae***. This is an *innocentii* v. *striatum* x *fulgens* hybrid, giving the plant large serrated green leaves. It is a handsome plant that originated in Belgium; at flowering time the inner floral bracts of rose red last in color for many months.

***Nidularium Madam Robert Morobe***. This cultivar is also the result of a cross between *Nidularium innocentii* v. *innocentii* and *N. fulgens*. There appear to be two forms of this plant: one is a soft green all over spotted with a deeper green, and the other is a soft green on top and the underside is a rich purplish maroon. (*This suggests that in the first cross the N. fulgens was dominant and in the latter the N. innocentii was dominant. Ed.*) The leaves are prominently toothed and when in flower the center is a vibrant cerise. Both are very large plants.

***Nidularium Raru***. This is a rather lovely hybrid but unfortunately the parents are unknown. It has attractive spotted green foliage with dark red floral bracts and whitish pink flowers.

***Nidularium Regal Lady***. This is a cross between *N. regelioides* and *N. rutilans*, and the object of the exercise was to see if there is a botanical difference between them or if they were the same species. If they were the same species, they would only have created the same offspring. However, as you can see, the cross produced a different plant and an F1 hybrid.

I hope you will add *Nidulariums* to your collections. Here we have only been able to talk about the most popular varieties, but if you were

to read Elton Leme's wonderful book on *Nidulariums* you would see there are many more beautiful species, most of which are not available here in NZ.

(*Ed. Note. I have added here Nidularium scheremetiewii, which Gerry did not cover in his talk; evidently this pretty plant is not grown in New Zealand.*)

***Nidularium sscheremetiewii***. A medium rosette with narrow leaves, narrowly tapering red bracts and purple-blue flowers with white margins.



This photo of *Nidularium scheremetiewii* is taken by Derek Butcher and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

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**BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO (BSSF)**

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The BSSF is a non-profit educational organization promoting the study and cultivation of bromeliads. The BSSF meets monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 PM in the Recreation room of the San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Meetings feature educational lectures and displays of plants. Go to the affiliate section of the BSI webpage for information about our meetings.

The BSSF publishes a monthly newsletter that comes with the membership. Annual dues are single (\$15), dual (\$20). To join the BSSF, mail your name(s), address, telephone number, e-mail address, and check made payable to the BSSF to:

Harold Charns, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

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**BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL**

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BROMELIAD SOCIETY  
OF  
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**Set aside time next month for our annual potluck holiday dinner!**

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